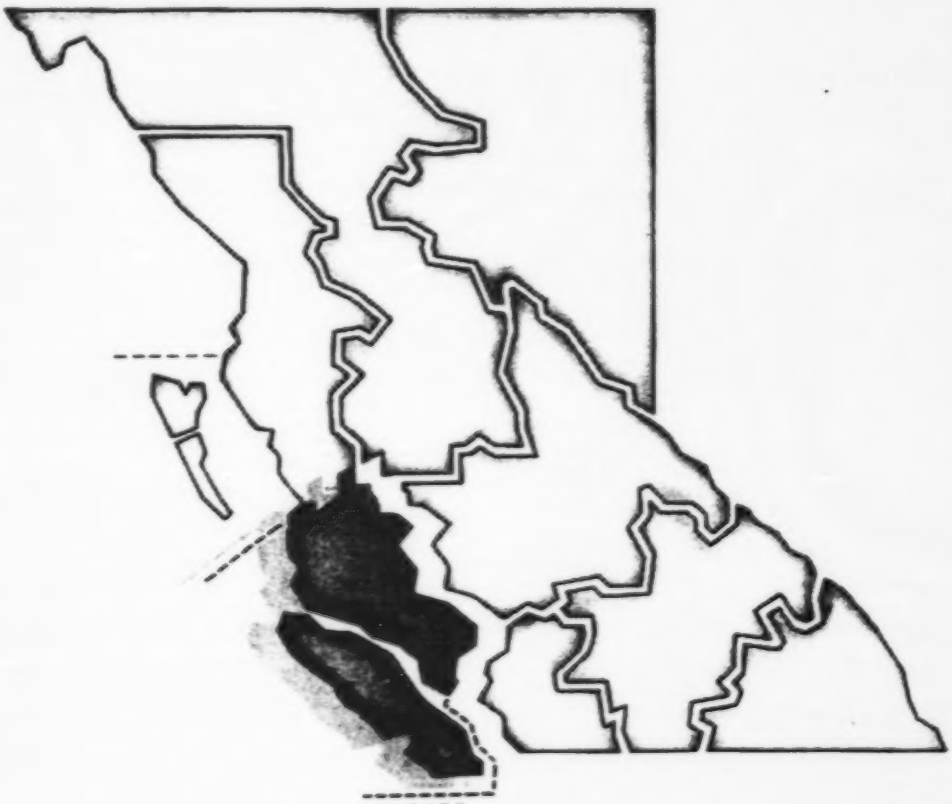
Vancouver Island/Coast Region

"Canada's Far West Opportunity"

1990 ANNUAL REPORT



Regional and Economic Development

Honourable Bud Smith, Q.C.
Minister of Regional and Economic Development

91-06140/

DEDICATION

This annual report is dedicated to the memory of Ian Terry, who served his community and the Vancouver Island/Coast Region tirelessly as:

- Chairman, Nanaimo Regional District
- Representative, Electoral Area 'F' - Nanaimo Regional District
- Director, B.C. Environmental Information Institute
- Chairman, Vancouver Island/Coast Waste Management Task Force
- Member, Vancouver Island/Coast Regional Advisory Committee
- Member, Vancouver Island/Coast Agriculture Task Force

as well as in many other capacities and organizations.

ANNUAL REPORT 1990
VANCOUVER ISLAND/COAST REGION

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Minister of Regional and Economic Development

We have had the good fortune to tap into a deep well of energy, dedication and effort in the Vancouver Island/Coast Region.

When we launched the regional development initiative in 1987, we were fully aware that, for the process to work, people in every community would have to get involved. The people of the Vancouver Island/Coast Region have responded with enthusiasm.

The excellence of the information and advice you have provided are demonstrated in your accomplishments this year, which have resulted in both social and economic benefits.

These accomplishments also testify to the effectiveness of the regional development initiative and the process that has evolved over the first three years.

The regional development initiative represents an innovative and unique approach to governing - you could even say experimental. The experiment has worked as well as it has, in part, due to the flexibility of the system.

The results are obvious . . . and outstanding. The people of the Vancouver Island/Coast Region have worked tirelessly for the benefit of the region. I commend you for your success. Keep up the good work!

A Message from Honourable Stan Hagen

Regional Advisory Committee Chairman

In reviewing the past year, we have a lot to be proud of in the Vancouver Island/Coast Region. We have recognized the potential of the regional development intiative and we have surpassed even our own initial expectations. Cooperation and creativity are the cornerstones of this success.

The benefits are many, and evident everywhere.

Aquaculture wastes will be reused as compost and other products due to funding provided to the UBC Oyster River Research Farm near Campbell River. Small business owners received information on business plans, marketing, financing, management and innovation at a pilot conference initiated in this region. Value-added wood product manufacturers identified actions to enhance wood supply which will result in greater economic benefit to this growing industy. The Island Highway which is now underway will provide greater access and safety to the entire region.

It has been a banner year for the Vancouver Island/Coast Region and I commend all of you who have volunteered your valuable time and talents to the regional Task Forces.

We say farewell, and give our thanks, to those who are resigning this year after three years of dedicated effort. We welcome the new members who have volunteered their time to work on future initiatives.

With the strong support of the people of the Vancouver Island/Coast Region, we will continue to add to your accomplishments in the coming year. I am pleased to have worked with such an innovative and progressive group.

Your hard work has brought us this far, and it will take us further yet. Thank you.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of regionalization is to ensure that regional needs are reflected in government policies, programs, and planning. This is pursued through:

- the identification of regional needs;
- cooperative problem solving;
- the advocacy of regional needs in the development of provincial policies, programs, and planning;
- provision of regional input into provincial initiatives and strategies;
- regional participation in government programs; and
- assistance in major economic development projects.

Regionalization is accomplished through the efforts of a variety of groups working with the Ministry of Regional and Economic Development and the Chairman of the Regional Advisory Committee.

This report is a summary of the activities and accomplishments of the members of the Vancouver Island/Coast Task Forces and Committees over the past year. It also contains a description of the structure established to oversee the regional development initiative in the Vancouver Island/Coast Region.

Concluding the report is a directory of the people who participate in the sectoral Task Forces, the Regional Advisory Committee, Associations with whom the Regional Development Group has excellent working relationships, and some key government contacts.

GROUPS FACILITATING REGIONALIZATION

Regional Development Group

The Regional Development Group is made up of representatives from the Association of Vancouver Island Municipalities (AVIM), Regional Districts, School Boards, Chambers of Commerce, the Vancouver Island Developers Economic Association (VIDEA), business, industry, and private citizens. Each of these groups have named representatives to the Regional Development Group. The Regional Development Group meets once a year at the Annual General Meeting.

Sector Task Forces

Each member of the Regional Development Group is a member of one or more of the following Task Forces; six of which are currently active:

- Agriculture
- Aquaculture
- Business Development
- Forestry
- Health
- Innovation and Technology
- Social Services
- Tourism
- Transportation
- Waste Management

The Task Forces:

- consider regional ideas and briefs presented to them;
- action specific projects; and
- recommend support for specific ideas, initiatives or policy changes to the Regional Advisory Committee

Ministry representatives serve as resource people to the Task Forces.

Regional Advisory Committee

The Regional Advisory Committee provides advice to the Regional Development Board related to priorities of the region and ensures that issues pursued are regional in scope. The Regional Advisory Committee consists of the chairpersons of the Task Forces which are currently active, and the executive of the Association of Vancouver Island Municipalities.

The Honourable Stan Hagen has assumed the position of Chairman of the Regional Advisory Committee.

Regional Development Board

In December, 1989, the Regional Development Board was formed to act as the lead advocate for regional initiatives. Consisting of seven cabinet ministers and two MLAs, the Regional Development Board meets on a regular basis to discuss regional priorities and develop recommendations for cabinet. Honourable Bud Smith, Q.C., Minister of Regional and Economic Development, is chairman of the Regional Development Board. Honourable Stan Hagen, Minister of Education, is also a member of the Board, representing the Vancouver Island/Coast Region.

ACTIVITY REPORTS

There has been considerable activity carried out within the various sectors over the past year.

Aquaculture

The Vancouver Island/Coast Region is the main focus of salmon farming activities in British Columbia. Shellfish species produced include oysters, blue mussels, and scallops.

Gillespie Report

Issue: One of the recommendations of the Gillespie Report of December 1986 was that the Provincial Government should initiate a program of coastal resource identification studies for use in directing aquaculture applications away from major resource and user conflict areas.

Status: The Coastal Resource Interests Study (CRIS) of the Nootka Sound area was carried out with financial support from the then Minister of State for the Region.

Technical Assistance for Industry

Issue: The Aquaculture Task Force felt that there was a need for institutions which would provide technical expertise and information to the aquaculture industry.

Status: Malaspina and North Island Colleges have expanded courses in aquaculture. The University of Victoria continues its involvement in the Bamfield Marine Station.

Fish Waste Disposal

Issue: The pick-up and disposal of waste from aquaculture sites has been identified by the Aquaculture Task Force as a potential problem because of a shortage of landfill sites, a growing amount of waste, and a lack of on-site handling facilities. There is concern that many farms in the industry are not strong enough financially to pay the cost of a regular waste and fish mortality pick-up service.

Status: Representatives from Mount Waddington, Comox Strathcona/Campbell River and Alberni-Clayoquot met with Ministers Stan Hagen, then Minister of Regional and Economic Development, and John Savage, then Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries in June to address the concerns. Ministry representatives from the Ministries of Crown Lands, Environment, Regional and Economic Development, and Agriculture and Fisheries attended the meeting.

In October, the Cabinet Committee on Sustainable Development approved the release of $150,000 per year over the next two years from the Sustainable Environment Fund to match funds provided by the Mount Washington Community Futures. This will provide for the creation of a modern fish waste composting and research facility at the UBC Oyster River Research Farm near Campbell River.

Salmonid Research and Demonstration Farm

Issue: The Aquaculture Task Force supports the concept of a salmonid research and demonstration farm located in the region.

Status: The British Columbia Aquaculture Research and Development Council, with the support of the Regional Districts of Alberni-Clayoquot, Mt. Waddington and the District Municipality of Campbell River, has taken the lead role in coordinating the development of the concept.

Aquaculture International

Issue: It was felt that the International Aquaculture Congress and Exposition was an appropriate venue to market the region's aquaculture opportunities.

Status: The Vancouver Island Developers Economic Association, with support from the Business Development and Aquaculture Task Forces, attended the exposition in Vancouver in September. A number of contacts were made resulting in additional business for companies located in the region.

Business Development

In support of sustainable economic development in the Vancouver Island/Coast Region, the Business Development Task Force has a mandate to attract new investment capital to the region while supporting the stabilization and enhancement of existing business. The following initiatives have been undertaken by the Task Force to support this mandate:

Small Business Task Force Input

Issue: The Business Development Task Force was asked to review and provide input on government financial assistance programs for the Small Business Task Force sponsored by the Ministry of Regional and Economic Development.

Status: The Business DevelopmentTask Force reviewed programs with bankers, businessmen and Economic Development Officers and made recommendations to the Small Business Task Force, many of which were included in the new programs.

Regional Marketing Action Plan

Issue: The Business Development Task Force recognized the need for additional equity investment and diversification in the region.

Status: The Business Development Task Force has undertaken the development of a marketing action plan. This strategy will identify potential sources of investment capital which can be attracted to the region. The action plan represents the second phase of the regional marketing strategy. The project was initiated in November 1989, when communities participated in a regional exhibit at the International Business and Investment Exposition in Vancouver.

Hong Kong Trade Show

Issue: In support of the marketing action plan, three members of the Vancouver Island Developers Economic Association (VIDEA), with the support of the Business Development Task Force, attended the Hong Kong Trade Show in May 1990. Sponsored by the Ministries of Regional and Economic Development and International Business and Immigration, the representatives took information on the region, and specific investment opportunities to the Trade Show.

Status: A large textile company has expressed an interest in locating a denim factory in Port Alberni. The Ministry of Regional and Economic Development is working with the proponents. Many other contacts have been established. The Hong Kong business magazine, the Emigrant, will be doing a feature article on the region in 1991.

Intra-Regional Airline Feasibility Study

Issue: The Transportation Task Force identified a need for an intra-regional scheduled air service.

Status: An informal survey conducted by the Business Development Task Force showed a willingness by small air carriers to establish scheduled air services if sufficient demand could be shown. The Business Development Task Force is undertaking a study to determine consumer demand for this service. The report will be released in early 1991.

Market Discovery '90

Issue: Market Discovery is a trade show in Vancouver which offers manufacturers an opportunity to display their products.

Status: The Vancouver Island/Coast Region supported the attendance of 27 local manufacturers at Market Discovery '90 in Vancouver.

Creating a Climate for Growth Conference

Issue: The Business Development Task Force recognized a need for a seminar which incorporated information on business plans, business start ups, marketing, financing, government programs, management and innovation for small to medium sized businesses in the region. The Creating a Climate for Growth Conference was designed to fill this need.

Status: The pilot Creating a Climate for Growth Conferencein Courtenay was funded by the Ministry of Regional and Economic Development. Co-sponsors were the Business Development Task Force, VIDEA, the Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce and the Comox Valley Economic Development Commission. The conference ran from September 28 to 29, 1990. Of the 152 attendees, half were interested in starting new businesses, and half had existing businesses. As the response to the conference was very positive, a second conference has been planned by the Thompson-Okanagan Region for Kelowna in March 1991.

Forestry

The manufacturing of value-added wood products is a small but growing industry in the Vancouver Island/Coast Region, employing over 1,000 people. To promote better use of forests and diversification within this industry, the Forestry Task Force has undertaken the following initiatives:

Specialty Wood Conference

Issue: The Forestry Task Force identified access to wood supply as a significant obstacle to the growth of the value-added wood products manufacturing industry in a study conducted in October 1989. Access to information on marketing techniques for independent producers was also identified as a requisite for growth.

Status: A conference which identified actions to enhance wood supply and to provide information on marketing was held in May, 1990 in Parksville. The results of this conference have been published in a report entitled "Wood Supply For Independent Specialty Mills" The Ministry of Forests will meet with the Task Force in early 1991 to address recommendations.

Forest Industry Directory

Issue: The Forestry Task Force felt there was a need to initiate the preparation of a directory of primary and secondary sawmills and specialty wood product manufacturers in the region.

Status: The provincial Ministries of Regional and Economic Development, Forests, BC Trade, and federal Departments of Forestry Canada and Industry, Science and Technology Canada are developing a province-wide electronic directory of wood users. This directory may eventually form a database from which all current directories are updated and printed. A regional breakdown will also be feasible.

Sourcing Available Wood Supply (SAWS)

Issue: The Forestry Task Force identified the need for a computerized "bulletin board" system to communicate availability of and requirements for wood supply, accessible to all suppliers and purchasers in the region.

Status: The Ministry of Forests is evaluating the feasibility of a pilot project in the Vancouver Island/Coast Region. A response is expected in the spring of 1991.

Health

Coordination of health services and acceptable levels of health service is an integral part of the infrastructure of the region. Initiatives relating to health issues include:

North Island Health Study

Issue: The Health Task Force supported the need for a review of the delivery of health services to the Regional Hospital Districts of Comox/Strathcona and Mt. Waddington.

Status: Report was completed in 1990. General, systemic and service specific recommendations were put forward to the Ministry of Health.

Water Management

Issue: The Health, Waste Management and Agriculture Task Forces felt there was a need to review water management issues in the region.

Status: The Ministry of Environment is preparing a discussion paper entitled "Sustaining the Water Resources: Directions for Legislative and Policy Reform". Recommendations of the joint Task Forces have been taken into account in the preparation of this paper, and the Task Force will be asked to review the document when released.

Alcohol and Drug Sub-Committee

Issue: Also known as the Community Action Program (CAP), this committee reviews applications and makes recommendation for the allocation of grants from the Ministry of Labour and Consumer Services, through the Drug and Alcohol Branch.

Status: During 1990, the committee reviewed 30 applications, and approved the allocation of over $300,000 in grant money. The committee is currently advocating for continued funding of the program.

Technology and Innovation

Knowledge-based industries in the Vancouver Island/Coast Region employ over 2200 people and generate $100 million in annual revenues (10 per cent of provincial total). The Vancouver Island/Coast Region, home to over 430 people with PhD degrees, a major university and several colleges, and a lifestyle and climate which attracts professionals, has all the critical components to attract technology-based industries. The region has seen annual growth rates in this industry of 25 per cent in marine, subsea, software, biotechnology, and other knowledge-based industries. Specific initiatives undertaken to support this growth include:

Vancouver Island Advanced Technology Centre

Issue: The Technology and Innovation Task Force assessed the region's technology-based industries and identified the need for a resource centre providing a focal point for businesses and organizations in this industry in the region. It was felt that operations should be overseen by a society consisting of industry, government, and educational representatives.

Status: Opened in November 1989, the centre's objectives include:

- providing business and marketing advice;
- providing technology-based product and service marketing assistance;
- liaising between industry, government and educational institutions;
- developing strategies to promote technology in the region; and
- attracting new technology-based industry to the region

Start up funding was provided to the centre through corporate donations and society memberships. Assistance for staff funding was provided this year through the support of VIDEA from the Ministry of Regional and Economic Development.

Telecommunications

Issue: The Technology and Innovation Task Force identified the need for a high-speed telecommunications infrastructure which would carry voice, data, and video imaging. This infrastructure would be used by knowledge-based companies, educational and research institutions, and government as an integrated "information highway" - this will be a catalyst to economic development in the region as highways and railways have been.

Status: Projected future demand for telecommunications by provincial and federal governments, industry, educational and technical institutions is being investigated. An indication of demand is required before the communication companies would consider enhanced hardware systems.

Tourism

The Vancouver Island/Coast Region attracts over 2 million tourists annually, contributing over one billion dollars per year to the economy of the province. The region offers the widest range of tourism opportunities in the province. Specific initiatives undertaken include:

Regional Tourism Opportunities Study

Issue: The Vancouver Island/Coast Tourism Task Force was asked to identify opportunities for development in the region's tourism industry. Comprised of tourism operators and representatives of tourism associations throughout the region, the Task Force reviewed the region's resource base and conducted eight public meetings throughout the region.

Status: The Tourism Task Force report will be released in early 1991.

Heritage Tourism Study

Issue: The Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Recreation and Culture approached the Tourism Task Force for support in identifying of heritage tourism opportunities in the Vancouver Island/Coast Region.

Status: The Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Recreation and Culture was invited to participate in public meetings so that specific heritage opportunities presented to the Tourism Task Force could be identified for the heritage consultant. The Task Force will continue to work with the ministry as the heritage study for the region continues.

Transportation

Transportation is a key infrastructure component of regional economic development. Initiatives for the Task Force include:

Transportation Plan

Issue: The Transportation Task Force was asked to prepare a transportation plan to cover all modes of travel in the region. Areas covered included air, rail, highways, coastal marine, including B.C. Ferries, and transit. In all areas the focus was on economic and social benefits to the region.

Status: The Vancouver Island/Coast Transportation recommendations were approved as part of the "Provincial Transportation in the 90s Plan", in May 1990. In October, the Transportation Task Force members met again to review the transportation priorities and recommend any changes to the Minister of Transportation and Highways for 1991-92. Since May, a great deal of progress has been made on individual projects as indicated below:

Project	Status
Highway 19: Shaw Hill-Trucklane	Completed
Highway 4: Canoe Creek Bridge Replace.	Completed
Highway 19: Keogh River Bridge Replace.	Completed
E-W Bamfield Study	Preliminary study near completion. Public review to be chaired by Ministry of Regional and Economic Development.

Project	Status
Highway 19: Nicol Street, Nanaimo - Four-laning	Design nearing completion. ROW acquisition underway. Negotiations underway for services relocation. Construction start anticipated by April 1991.
Durrance Lake Road: Relocation - New Construction	Completed.
Highway 14: Colwood-Sooke Four Laning	Construction to be completed by June 15, 1991.
Port Alice Road: Marble River Bridge Replace.	Completed by March 31, 1991.
Highway 14: Sooke-Coopers Cove Realign	Construction underway. to be completed by the end of 1991.
Port Alberni Curb and Gutter	Design completed and tender called. Construction to be complete by summer 1991.
Highway 1/19: Brechin Hill/Departure Bay-Traffic Study	Planning study nearing completion
Highway 4: Parksville-Port Alberni Trucklanes	Design underway on two sections, Redford Road to the summit. Construction of first section complete by end of 1991. Design to continue on additional sections.

Project	Status
Highway 28: Campbell River - Gold River - Trucklanes	Detail design underway. Buttle Narrows-Campbell River (2.5 km). Construction underway, with balance to be complete by July 1991. Design and construction of additional section to be undertaken in 1991.
Highway 14: Jordan River Bridge	Detailed design completed. Construction to proceed spring 1991.
Highway 14: Circo & Pat Phillips Bridge Replacement	Design complete. Project has been tendered, completion by end of 1991.
Crofton Road: New alignment and construction	Detailed design underway. Construction to commence 1991.
Lake Cowichan-Port Alberni-Cumberland Circle Route Study	Planning study to be complete by summer 1991. Further decision will be dependant on study recommendations.
Gabriola Island Bridge Study	Currently on hold pending outcome of Duke Point study.
Highway 19: Reroute to Campbell River Harbour Development	Design proceeding. Surplus dredged material placed in road prism. Future construction timing dependant on funding availability.

Submission to the Royal Commission on National Passenger Transportation

Issue: The Federal Royal Commission on National Passenger Transportation requested submissions on the future of rail transportation in Canada.

Status: A written submission recommending improvements to the E&N Railway was presented to the commission in December by Transportation Task Force Chairman Gillian Trumper.

BC Ferries

Issue: A number of concerns relating to BC Ferries' service and the corporation's apparent lack of responsiveness to residents of the region were identified in the Transportation Task Force Report.

Status: A meeting was held with Mr. Frank Rhodes, President and Chief Executive Officer, and Bill Long, Chairman of the Board of B.C. Ferry Corporation, the AVIM Executives, and the Regional Advisory Committee in September in Vancouver. Results include initiation of an early scheduled ferry for cargo and grants in lieu of taxes to communities with ferry terminals. Mr. Rhodes has agreed to speak to the annual general meeting of the AVIM in March 1991.

Resource Roads

Issue: The Provincial Government has been examining the policies, administration and legislation pertaining to resource roads in British Columbia.

Status: At the request of the Minister of Transportation and Highways, the Transportation Task Force provided recommendations to the provincial government regarding resource roads. The Task Force recommended that construction of roads to resource road standard which would provide benefits other than access to minerals and timber (i.e. health, education, tourism, economic development and administration) should be incorporated into the Resource Road policy. This has now been accomplished. The Task Force will be asked to provide further comments on the draft policy in 1991.

ATAP Program

Issue: The Air Transportation Assistance Program provides grants for community airport development. The Transportation Task Force provided recommendations regarding assistance under this program as part of the transportation planning process.

Status: The following projects have been assisted with funding under this program for 1990-91:

- Alert Bay - pave runway extension, apron and vehicle parking;
- Port Alberni - runway, taxi and access road construction;
- Nanaimo - crack sealing, paving vehicle parking area.

Inactive Task Forces

The Agriculture, Aquaculture and Waste Management Task Forces have not been active in the past year but will address any regionally significant issues that may arise in these sectors. The Agriculture Task Force has been inactive since submission of a comprehensive evaluation of the role of the Agricultural Land Commission to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. The release of the report is on hold, pending province-wide policy development by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

The Social Services Task Force stood down in the summer of 1990 after submitting a report through the Regional Advisory Committee to the Ministry of Social Services and Housing, making recommendations for support of community social service organizations.

REGIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Hon. Stan Hagen Chairman	Comox MLA, Member of the Regional Development Board	Rm. 103, Parliament Buildings Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4	(B) 387-5891
Hans Irg	Chairman Agriculture Task Force	R.R. #1, S-151, C-4 Port Alberni, B.C. V9Y 7L5	(B) 723-1740
Rose Davison	Chairman Aquaculture Task Force	P.O. Box 549 #3 Davison Place Ucluelet, B.C. V0R 3A0	(B) 726-7445
Jack Turner	Chairman Business Development Task Force	R.R. #1, Site 43, C15 Fanny Bay, B.C. V0R 1W0	(B) 334-4452
Mayor Gerry Furney	Chairman Forestry Task Force	Box 333 Port McNeill, B.C. V0N 2R0	(B) 956-3333
Mayor Anne Fiddick	Chairman Health Task Force	P.O. Box 261 Gold River, B.C. V0P 1G0	(B) 283-2202
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REGIONAL TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Agriculture Task Force (Inactive)

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Aquaculture Task Force (Inactive)

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Bill Shephard	Regional District of Mount Waddington	Box 729 Port McNeill, B.C. V0N 2R0	(B) 956-3301
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Gilbert Popovich	Mayor Alert Bay	P.O. Box 2 118 Fir St. Alert Bay, B.C. V0N 1A0	(B) 974-5311

Business Development Task Force

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Ken Hutcheson	Past President VIDEA	Box 234 9151 Faber Rd. Port Alberni, B.C. V9Y 7M7	(B) 723-6841
Bill LeSage	Parksville	#8 - 650 Hoylake Rd. Qualicum Beach, B.C. V0R 2T0	(H) 752-6317
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Business Development Task Force - continued

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Forestry Task Force

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Jim Loftus	Sayward	3837 Sutil Rd. Campbell River, B.C. V9W 5T7	(B) 287-8881
Don Lockstead	Mayor, Powell River	6910 Duncan St. Powell River, B.C. V8A 1V4	(B) 485-6291
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Patricia Fletcher	Economic Development Officer, Central Coast Regional District	P.O. Box 10 Airport Road Hagensborg, B.C. V0T 1H0	(B) 982-2433
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Health Task Force

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